

Mr. Chairman and committee members thank you for allowing me to testify in front of you today in support of House Bill 1612. My name is Jacob Rabon. I am a resident of District 17 in Grand Forks and I recently graduated from the University of North Dakota with a Bachelor's degree in operations & supply chain management. I am currently serving in the Minnesota Army National Guard as a Unit supply specialist (92Y) and on the civilian side, I work in global supply chain. You might be asking yourself why is a young man who has made his career in logistics testifying before for us today about a mental health in aviation bill? My answer would be, because I lived it. I lived the consequences of society not taking mental health in aviation seriously.

On October 18th, 2021 I received news that would change the lives of many at the University of North Dakota. During this time I was the President of Delta Tau Delta Fraternity and at first, it seemed to be a normal Monday with lots of class and meetings. Early into the night, I received a phone call from my vice president saying that the police were at one of our members' homes and that the airport was shut down. Not being an aviation student I didn't understand the connection between the airport shutting down and police being at our member's home. My vice president went on to tell me that the Grand Forks airport rarely shuts down and it is closed because of a plane crash and that the police were at our member's home because they believed that he was flying the aircraft when it crashed. I asked him if this must be some horrible accident. Do you have any more information? He responded with "Jake the last speed clocked by the plane was 156 Knots and the only way you can reach that speed in a single engine piper archer aircraft is in a nose dive". I took a deep breath and paused, then told my vice president to gather everyone at the fraternity house so we could relay the news. Fifteen minutes later we

walked into a full house of 80 active members, alumni, and staff laughing as if the day was normal. Minutes later, I regrettably had to share the news that brother, John Hauser passed away, and tragically took his own life in a UND training plane. It was at that time, the room of laughter turned into tears and happiness turned into grief.

John Hauser was a good young man, an outstanding student, and a great friend and brother. We all wondered why John, who always had a smile and was living his best life, would do something like this. He never shared his true feelings about his mental health with anyone. Later we realized that John was trying to send a message to our community to take mental health seriously and that he'd rather die than not pursue his dream of being a pilot.

After all the vigils, funerals, and grief my fraternity and I knew that a change needed to be made in the aviation industry so a situation like Johns would never happen again. A change That would allow pilots struggling with mental health to have the opportunity to talk with others about their feelings without fear of retaliation because we are all people and no man or woman is perfect. So I'll restate a question you might have had earlier in my testimony: "Why is a young man who has made his career in logistics testifying before us today about a mental health aviation bill?" The reason being because we have a war going on against the mental health of pilots and air traffic controllers, and other aviation related professionals, and the state of north dakota has the opportunity right now to lead the way and be the tip of the spear in resolving this conflict. We have the opportunity to say to pilots and other aviation professionals all around the world not only should you come to The University of North Dakota to become one of the best pilots or air traffic controller in the world but also that the state of North Dakota cares about you, will fight for you, and will stand next to you when times get hard. House bill 1612 has the opportunity to take the first step in giving more resources our pilots, air traffic controllers and

others throughout the state of North Dakota. This will establish a precedent that the university of North Dakota and our state take this matter seriously and are working to make it better. What you heard today is simply one of many stories that I have relating to aviation mental health. So today I ask you to support House Bill 1612, and give it a favorable do pass out of committee. Thank you again Mr. Chairman and the members of the Human Services committee for your time. I will happily answer any questions you may have.